

Griffith Motorcycle Centre Cup

Last Sunday saw Griffith Cycle Club riders contest the fourth round of the Griffith Motorcycle Centre Cup. The weather was quite filthy with overcast sky that was to inevitably turn to rain. A good roll up of 17 riders faced the starter which given the conditions was excellent.

The handicapper split the field into six groups. The limit group had Peggy Carpenter with Albert Ravanello and Peter Stockwell enjoying a 14 minute start.

Second limit was the duo of Gary Polkinghorne and Dick Hore who started on 9:00 minutes.

The third limit group was a further two minutes back with Leanne Kennedy, Jenni Massey and Lyall Mumford.

The 3:00 minute group was made up of our Leeton riders with Tony Pietsch having his first hit out with the club along with Dennis Irvine and Neil Warnock.

The chopping block group was given a skinny 45 seconds start over scratch with David Alpen, Mitch Harrison and Russell Webb.

Scratch was Rob Hall, Jed Cutter and Peter Budd.

The back markers had been doing it tough in the series so far and they were due to put in a good showing. The limit trio were riding well in the conditions and their first lap went by in just on 20:00 minutes.

By the end of the first lap the scratch group had picked up the chopping block riders as expected and went through their first lap in 15:50. The 4:10 difference was too much and if these lap times repeated then the scratch group would hit the lead on the last lap.

By the end of lap two the back markers had also picked up the 3:00 minute group and now all riders were rolling through at speed. There was no hope for the front runners despite their strong efforts. The speed of the back markers was too great.

With half a lap to go the back markers hit the race lead for the first time in the series. It was now down to tactics for the finish. Rob Hall had been riding well all race and blasted out of the Murrumbidgee Avenue corner and gapped the peloton.

Mitch Harrison saw the danger and quickly jumped after him. Hall and Harrison then dangled off the front of the peloton who couldn't quite get their act together in the chase.

The leading pair rounded the final corner with about 50 metres to the field. Jed Cutter found himself on the front of the chase and he buried himself trying to close the gap.

Hall was riding too well to let this victory go by and he kicked for the line with Harrison struggling to hold the wheel. Hall took a great win with Harrison just holding on for second from a fast finishing Russell Webb in third.

David Alpen dug deep to take fourth place with Peter Budd fading in fifth. Leanne Kennedy showed some good form to beat home all the other guys in sixth and final points.

With his great third place sprint Russell Webb has blasted in to the series lead on 54 points. He has opened an 8 point buffer to Dennis Irvine and Lyall Mumford, both on 46. Fourth place has an improving David Alpen on 45 points and the top five rounded out with Neil Warnock on 44.

Rob Hall being the best of the scratch riders on 40 points in sixth place.

B, C & Women's Road Club Championships

This weekend sees the B grade, C grade and Women's road club championships being contested. The Women's event is run concurrently with the B grade championship over four laps of the Hanwood course. The race shall be a good contest between the experience Jenni Massey and the up and coming Leanne Kennedy.

Both riders know how to stay out of the wind and it could very well come down to the sprint to determine the "best" women's rider for 2010. Both Kennedy and Massey have put in good sprint results in the last month so it could go down right to the wire.

The C grade field race over three laps and a winner will be hard to pick. The contest between Peggy Carpenter and Jo Polkinghorne will go a long way to determine the winner.

The B Grade event will have the strongest field for many years. It will be an intriguing battle between the sprinters and the rouleurs. Matt Nugan has been in great sprinting form and will be very hard to beat if the race comes down to a sprint.

The Club's Leeton recruits have shown some good racing legs in recent weeks and none of them are afraid of doing the hard work. Their challenge will be to adapt to the scratch race tactics.

Neil Warnock and Dennis Irvine now have a few races under their belts and could well hold the key to the race. Along with Rob Houghton they will need to ride an attacking race to nullify the speed of Nugan in a sprint.

Peter Bastianon is another rider who can do it all and will certainly be in the mix come the finish.

Gary Polkinghorne easily won the C grade championships last year and he will be out to put in a good race in the higher grade. Dick Hore is not afraid to attack and he is most likely to be off the front at some point in the race.

Leanne Kennedy and Jenni Massey whilst also racing in the Women's championships will be challenging the men for the B grade honours. They will be not be easily put away as they both

sit a very good wheel. They will be very hard to shake and if either one were to get in a break have the class and the sprint to spring a surprise result.

Racing gets underway at 9:00am with riders to register at 8:30am at the start/finish line.

- Rouleur – is a cycling term (no doubt French) for a rider who can sit on the front and ride all day but who doesn't possess a strong sprint.